



Establishing an Evidence Hub for CGIAR's Gender Platform

Good Practices Report [DRAFT]

Background

The new [CGIAR GENDER Platform](#) will contribute to the [One CGIAR](#) mission of ending hunger through science-driven transformation of food, land and water systems in the context of climate change, by reimagining the CGIAR gender-research-for-development agenda. We envision [a new era in which](#) food systems transformation and gender equality reinforce one another, accelerating and amplifying benefits that are equitable, sustainable and lasting.

This report outlines the broad scope for developing an evidence hub that will be integrated with the Platform resource centre and highlights best practices and examples in establishing a user-friendly knowledge hub.

Outline

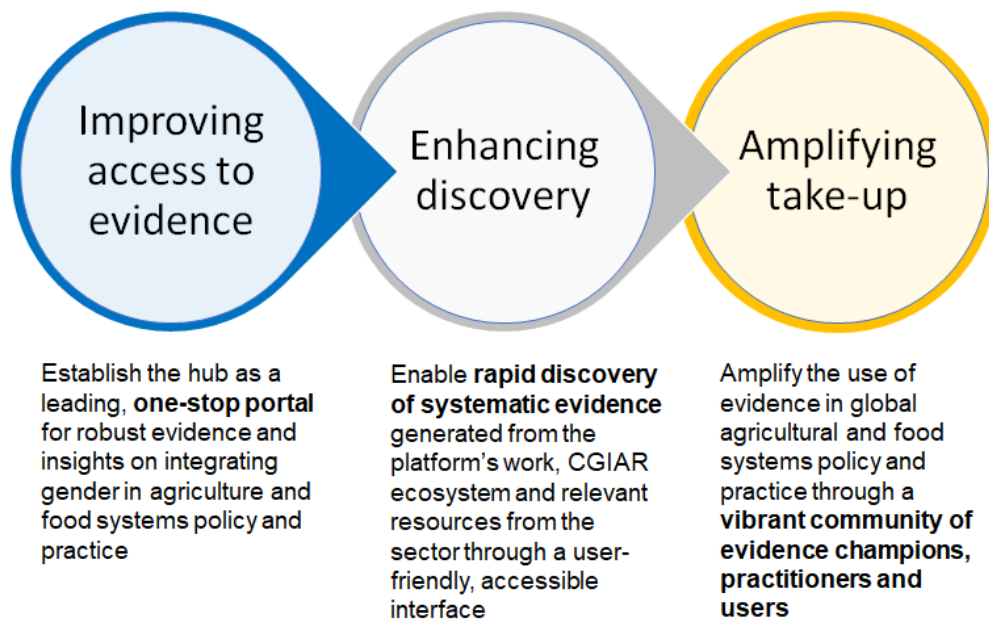
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GENDER Evidence Hub

The CGIAR Gender Platform Evidence Hub which will be housed in the Platform Resource Center is envisioned to be a mechanism to consolidate the collective knowledge on credible, legitimate and relevant evidence in the realm of gender and food systems. It provides a basis for debating and building evidence-based knowledge and practice in the Platform's focus areas. The evidence hub will act as a central repository for collective intelligence or arguments in gender in agriculture and food systems. Some proposed hub titles are included below -

1. Gender in Agricultural Systems: an Evidence Repository (GASER)
2. Agriculture Systems and Gender: Insightful Long-term Evidence (AGILE)

Objectives



Scope

Based on the Evidence Gap Mapping exercise and identified key themes and sub themes of interest, the evidence hub will be organized into sections and subsections that are easily navigable and readily accessible. Along with the insights and resources categorised as mentioned, the hub will also host the EGM visual map as well as a forum for online stakeholder discussions.

The hub will be a go-to repository for incremental evidence in the space of Gender and Food Systems. The hub will house different types of resources such as publications (journals, reports, policy briefs etc.), datasets, and multimedia, both internal to the CGIAR community and from the larger ecosystem.

The intent of the evidence hub is to enable the audience and the research/academic community to -

- Explore and debate the key challenges for the Gender in Agriculture movement. The community can link these challenges to issues, claims, organisations and solutions they are concerned with.
- Members of the community can add a description of their work including geographical location and other relevant details.
- Current questions can be posted, explored and discussed and new solutions proposed to tackle the major challenges.
- Relevant evidence and resources for the community can be shared to contribute to the evidence base.

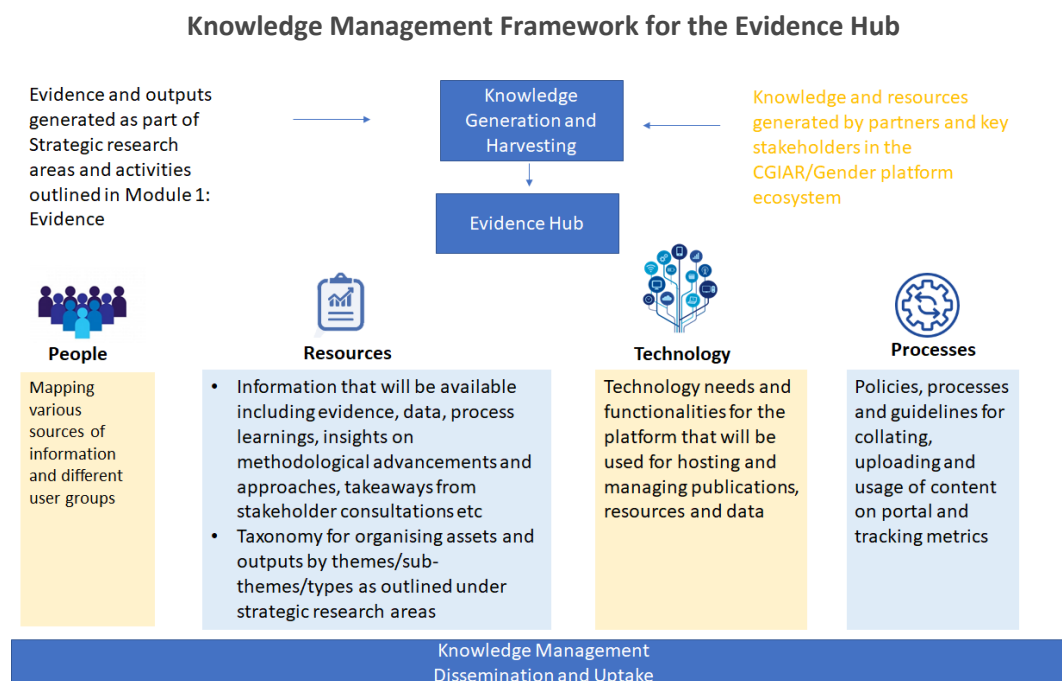
Framework

The following graphic illustrates the key elements of a knowledge management framework for the GENDER platform, to position GENDER as the go-to-place for high quality evidence and knowledge on equitable and sustainable food systems.

- People
- Resources
- Technology
- Processes

The evidence hub will aim to pool resources generated by the Platform, CGIAR partners such as national agricultural research and extension systems, university partners, advanced research institutions, non-government organizations, multilateral institutions and governments with whom CGIAR collaborates,

and other entities. It will also consolidate and showcase key issues, insights and evidence from major websites and aligned repositories that have published thought provoking material on the subject (such as IFPRI's e-library <https://ebrary.ifpri.org/digital/collection/p15738coll2/id/129389/>; Data 2x - <https://data2x.org/> etc.)



The hub will map both the **social** (people, organisations etc.) and **discourse** (issues, hypothesis, evidence etc.) ecosystem. Resources will be crowdsourced from the social ecosystem to triangulate information that is identified and filtered from the discourse ecosystem.

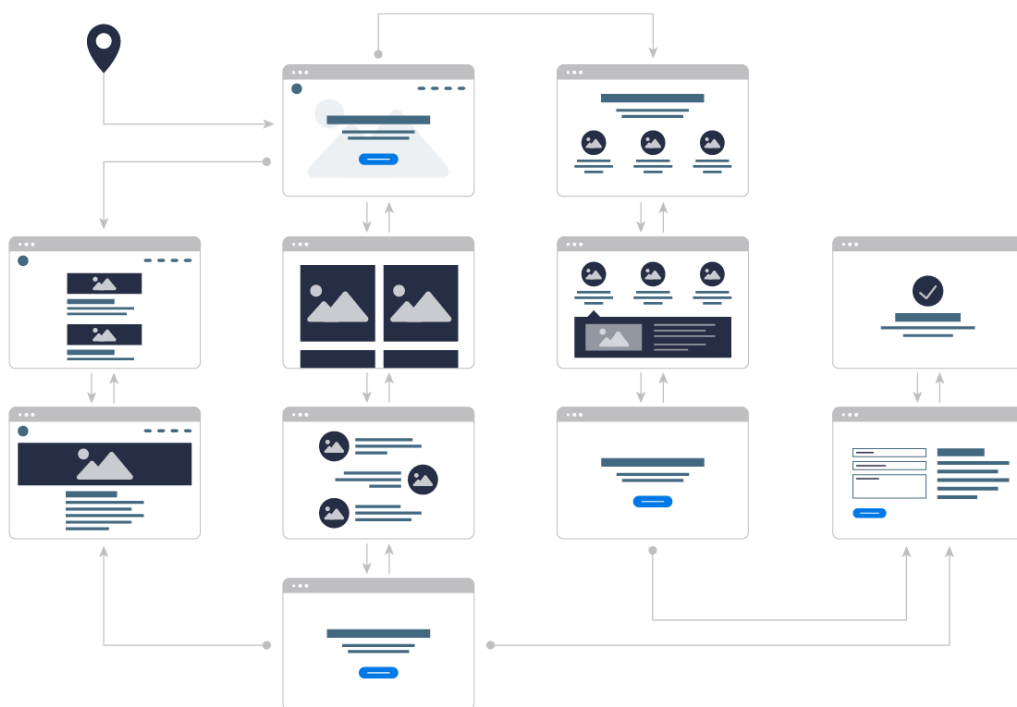
Review of Best Practices

Based on a review of literature around effective knowledge management and dissemination practices, and a review of evidence platforms across sectors and domains, the following practices and strategies are recommended for establishing an evidence hub for the CGIAR GENDER platform:

Know your users

A thorough mapping of different stakeholder groups and audiences and profiling their user journeys is essential to ensure that they are able to access required information and meet their goals in the least number of clicks possible. Consulting users from the outset can build buy-in, improve evidence uptake and engagement with the hub.

The below image provides a snapshot of the user pathway through the hub from landing on the portal to visiting key touchpoints.

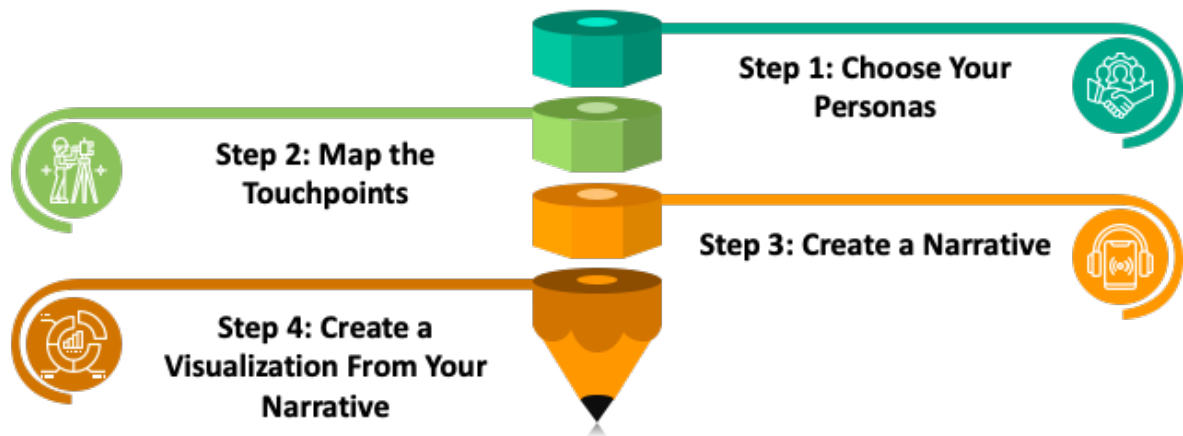


Source: <https://www.optimizely.com/optimization-glossary/user-journey-map/>

The journey mapping should include identification of personas of target customers and mapping their potential experience on the site. Thereafter a narrative or a story can be developed based on the derived user personas and touchpoints and this story can be visualised through user friendly layouts.

User journey map

Steps to follow



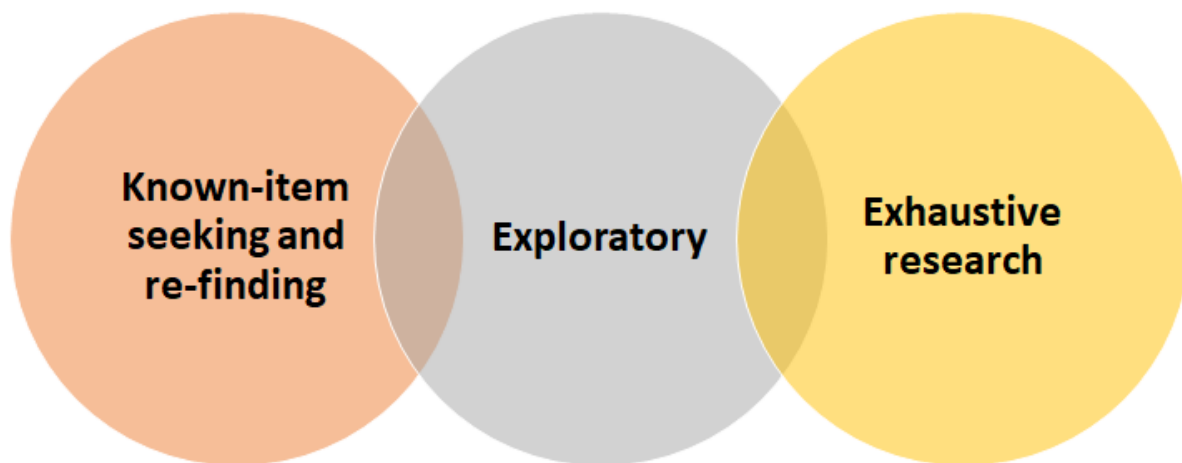
Before commencing the hub design, a sample end user group (through internal networks) could be approached with a structured questionnaire to understand the various user paths and characteristics.

Have a robust, intuitive information architecture

The information should be organized using relevant taxonomy, keywords and themes/groups that are commonly used by the stakeholders in the sector as well as determined from the EGM exercise. Search engine optimization can be achieved through the right combination of keywords. Resources can also be grouped and presented for different users e.g. resources for researchers, resources for policymakers, and so on.

Key Principles to be keep in mind for this:

- Organise content based on different [goals of seeking information](#) as indicated in the graphic below:



Case: Users are searching for specific outputs and know the relevant keywords

Design principles:

- Prominent search bar
- Quick links to sub-sections e.g. resources for researchers
- Clear navigation

Case: Users are browsing repository or conducting an –open-ended search

Design principles:

- Have a prominent featured content section on the landing page
- Present relevant user-oriented content such as videos, ‘related information’ grouped together, by theme.

Case: Users are conducting extensive research and interested in finding as much information as possible.

Design principles:

- Appropriate categorisation of resources by theme, use of relevant keywords
- Providing advanced search filters to enhance discovery with minimum clicks.

Adapted from: <https://boxesandarrows.com/four-modes-of-seeking-information-and-how-to-design-for-them/>

Website navigation is an important element of designing a user-friendly evidence portal. Mapping user flows is a key step that will inform the design of the interface. At this stage, it is important to consider the following points:

- What information are different user groups likely to search for?
- What are the different entry points to the evidence portal? E.g. through Google search, email campaigns, social media
- What actions are they likely to take once they have discovered the information they are looking for? E.g. download publication/data, share publication etc.

Following is a simplified example of a potential user flow for an evidence hub:

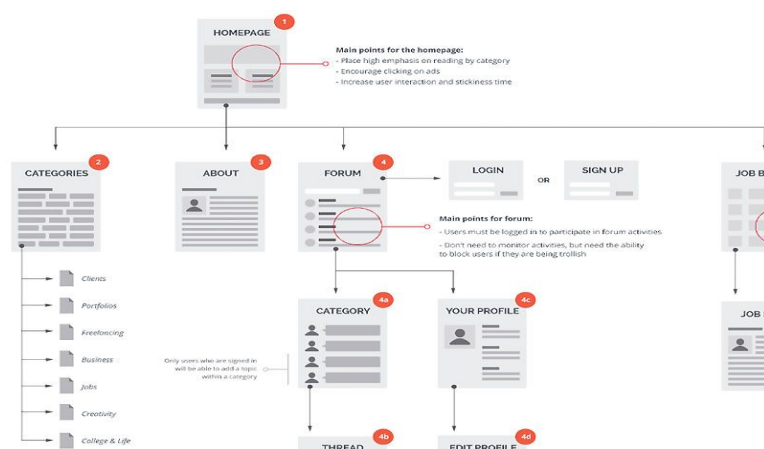
- The user arrives at the homepage → From the homepage the user clicks on the Resources tab → From the Resources tab the user uses the search menu to look for outputs related to a specific research theme → From the search results generated, the user downloads the first output

Some best practises in terms of ease of navigation include -

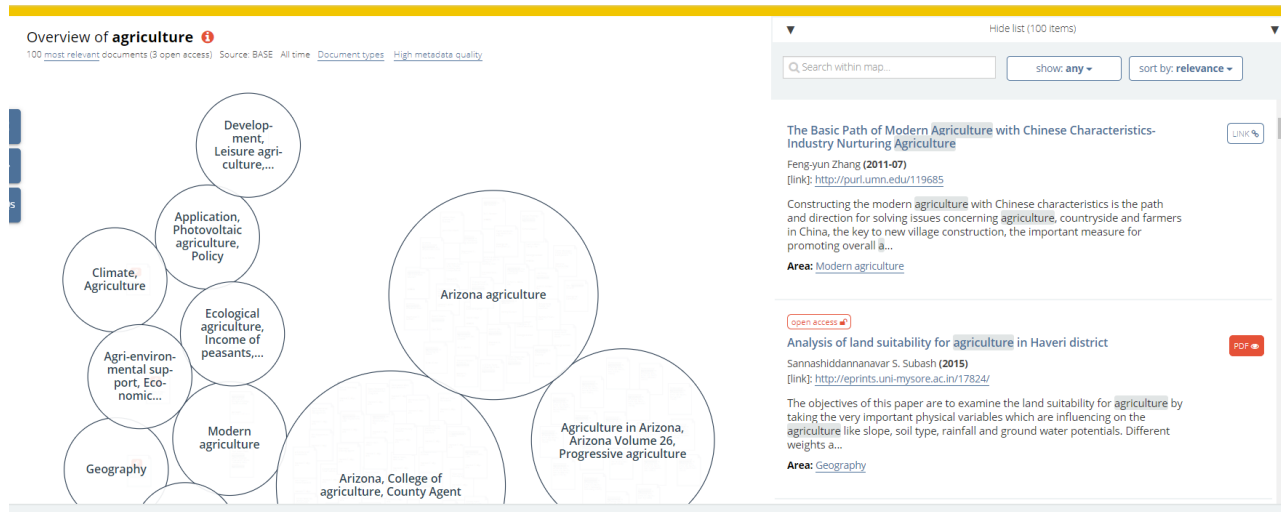
1. Type of menu - based on the number of links to be housed under the hub, we could use the mega menu style (for more links) or the cascading menu style (for fewer links). This will depend on the key user profiles
2. Add an interactive site map - the site map can be in the form of a video tutorial that would explain how to navigate the hub to the end user
3. Use of labels and icons - intuitive labels and icons can be used with menu links to communicate the information
4. Search versus navigation - use both in tandem to address the different user groups and individual preferences
5. Ready display of information - use simple classification categories to reduce search time

Based on the user flow mapping exercise, the navigation should be intuitive and query forms should provide relevant filters for enabling users to generate reports and search for outputs accordingly. Relevant fields can include themes and sub-themes related to the platform's strategic agenda, region, type of output, year. Advanced filters can be added over time, as the volume of outputs stored on the hub gradually increases.

Example: a website user flow



Example: dynamic knowledge map to visualise outputs and enable rapid discovery



Open Knowledge Maps presents a topical overview for your search term based on the 100 most relevant documents for your search term. This feature can be added over time, to speed up discovery of relevant information by research area or theme. Interactive evidence gap maps provide users a birds-eye view of the evidence base on a specific theme, identify areas with little to no evidence, and can facilitate collaboration across the CGIAR and development ecosystem. As a starting point, we will integrate the EGM visual in the evidence hub and at a later stage this can be expanded into a more comprehensive open knowledge map.

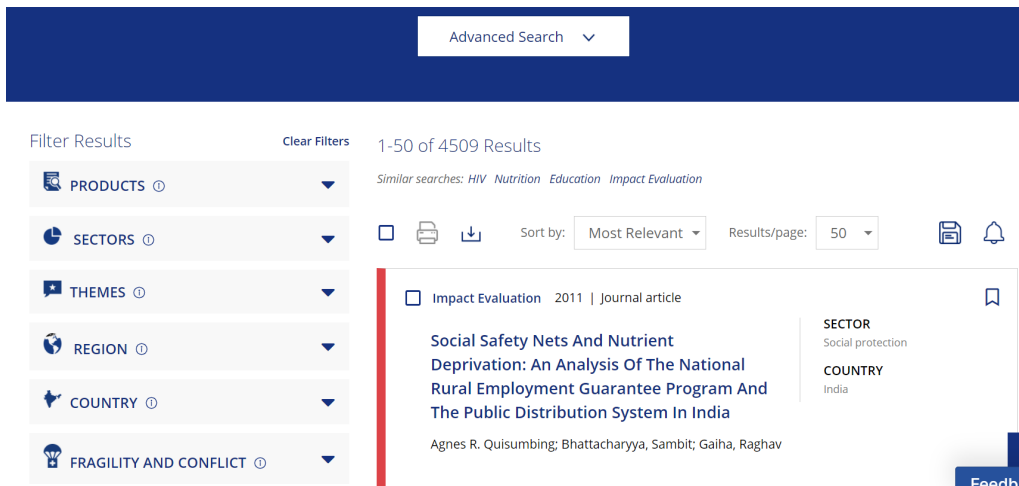
Have an elegant and user-friendly interface

Integrating principles of visual hierarchy is essential to deliver a user-friendly interface.

- For text-heavy websites and sections, an F-shaped pattern can be used to draw the user's attention to the most important sections of the website. In this case, the F-shaped pattern can be used to display the search filters and results (example below- 3ie Development Evidence portal).

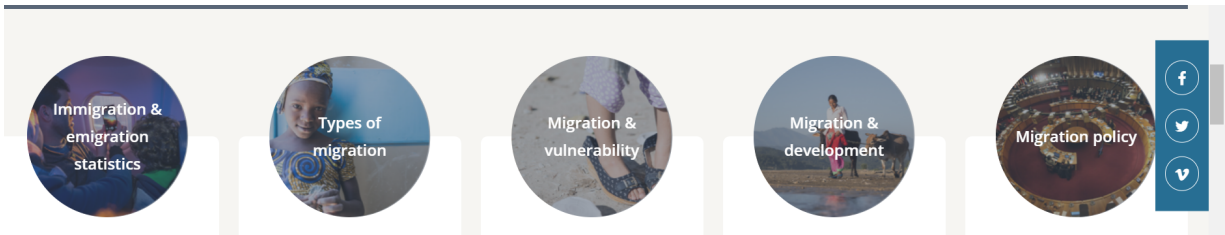
Example: Search form on 3ie's Development Evidence Portal with an

F-shaped layout for the search menu



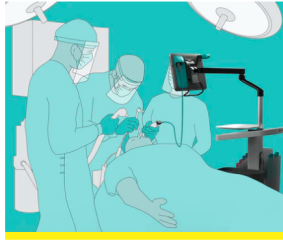
- Images and icons receive more prominent attention compared to text and can be used to draw the user's attention to featured content sections or thematic sections

Example: [Theme-wise menu on Migration Data Portal](#)



- Call-to-Action buttons e.g. Download, Learn More, Sign Up should be in prominent, contrasting colours in line with the platform's brand identity
- Using white spaces is important to provide visual relief to users and complement the use of text, images and colour blocks used in other sections:

Example: IDEO's card style display



CASE STUDY VERATHON MEDICAL

An Improved Airway
Intubation System That
Helps Physicians Save
More Lives



JOURNAL BECKY BERMONT & DEIRDRE
CERMINARO

The Radical Power of
Listening in Times of Crisis



CASE STUDY THE SAN FRANCISCO
DEPARTMENT OF EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT

Designing a City
Emergency Plan

- Finally, A/B testing can be carried out with a sample of users to understand which interface works better. Such pilots can be conducted with closed user groups from the immediate CGIAR family and ecosystem partners. Design thinking workshops can also be conducted to capture any design elements that might have been overlooked while conceptualising the architecture and layout of the evidence hub.

Design a proactive outreach strategy

Collating and making evidence available on the hub is only the first step in improving access to credible evidence. Research by the Alliance for Useful Evidence suggests that enabling uptake through targeted communication strategies, and engaging with users (The Science of Using Science, 2016) is crucial in enabling research uptake. Designing a package of communication strategies including email marketing campaigns, and innovative social media strategies can generate higher traffic. Moreover, hosting a dedicated blog on the platform can be an effective channel for presenting non-technical summaries and actionable takeaways of publications and outputs.

Engage with users

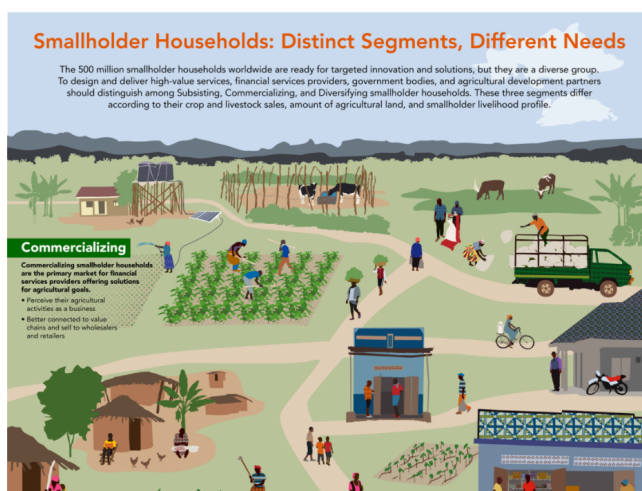
User engagement can be boosted by collecting feedback from a sample on a periodic basis and analysing user journeys to identify any shortcomings in design. For instance, CGIAR and IFPRI use Altmetric to show how many have accessed a specific article, and [how many have cited or mentioned it on social media platforms](#). Having a dedicated forum for chats with experts and practitioners can result in higher traffic to the hub and improve engagement with knowledge products and offerings. Further, creating a network of evidence champions and a vibrant community of practitioners that serve as ambassadors for the platform's work can enable wider reach as well. A lot of evidence centres also encourage cross platform tracking of mentions of the evidence hub (in twitter and other social media platforms) which can be adopted during platform design. These efforts can be aligned with existing initiatives such as

[CGIAR Dgroup](#) to minimise duplication of efforts, ensure optimal use of resources and aim for greater integration across the ecosystem in line with the objectives set for 'One CGIAR'.

Integrate storytelling

Digital storytelling techniques and innovative formats such as video abstracts, explainers, interactive graphics and infographics can help translate key messages into digestible formats for different audiences. This approach has the potential to elucidate complex concepts and research in a compelling and accessible manner while retaining the nuances of various forms of research and the voices of beneficiaries and other stakeholder groups.

Example: CGAP's infographic on [segmenting smallholder households](#) and interactive [data hub](#)



Collaborative approach

The evidence hub should allow different users to build progressively and collaboratively on the same content, thus facilitating collaborative knowledge production and discovery. The system should allow users to easily add evidence or present counter-evidence to other claims, thus triggering conversations and knowledge sharing between people who tackle similar issues. Finally, the evidence hub should allow users to visualize, explore and be part of a social network of contributors. This would ensure sustainability of the hub beyond just sharing or showcasing resources in the areas of gender and agriculture.

Monitor & Evaluate

It is important to conduct a baseline assessment of the current traffic to the GENDER platform and establish key metrics that will be tracked to assess the evidence hub's reach. This is important for

understanding trends in user behaviour and enhancing the hub's reach over time. A number of factors influence website traffic including navigation, design, on-page and off-page Search Engine Optimisation, use of relevant keywords, loading speed, linkages with social media channels and campaigns, among others. Analysing traffic can inform strategies for course correction with respect to content, layout and design of sections, if required.

Some of the relevant metrics that can be tracked in this regard are:

- Audience data - number of visits, number of unique visitors and growth in these numbers
- New vs returning visitor ratio
- Number of views of specific pages/outputs, downloads and social shares of outputs
- Length of time per visit
- Campaign data - for instance, whether email marketing campaigns or social media campaigns are more effective in driving traffic to the hub

Processes and guidelines

A robust process flow is required to govern all activities related to uploading, updating and managing information on the hub using a content management system. This will ensure that the hub remains up-to-date with relevant information and build its influence and credibility as a go-to platform for evidence on the subject.

The process flows should also illustrate the linkages between the hub and CGIAR ecosystem, including protocols for depositing outputs and metadata in proper institutional or platform repositories, and editorial and style guidelines, in line with CGIAR and the GENDER platform's policies.

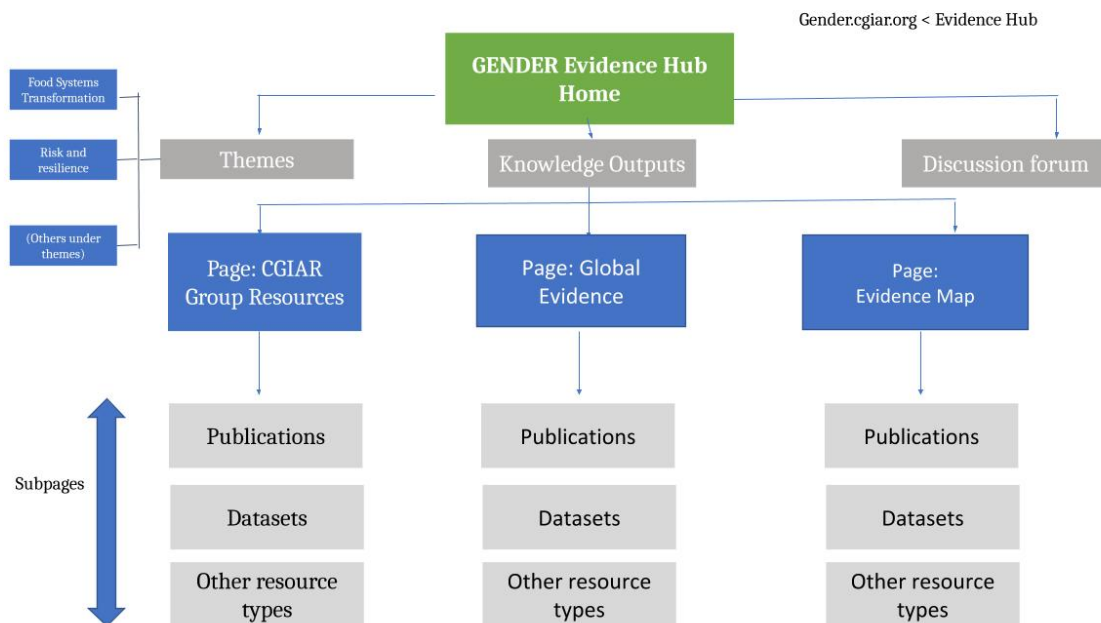
Examples

Portals/Hubs reviewed (URL)	Observations
https://knowledge.unccd.int/search?text=gender&op=Search	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Intuitive search categories ● Added layers of content, coverage, type of information etc.
https://migrationhealthresearch.iom.int/migration-health-evidence-portal-covid-19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Snapshot of information available on platform provided on homepage ● Results of search can be downloaded as an MS Excel file

https://educationendowmentfoundation.org.uk/evidence-summaries/teaching-learning-toolkit/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessible summary of international evidence on teaching presented through an interactive graphic • Ratings for strength of evidence
https://migrationdataportal.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information available in multiple languages • User-friendly navigation menu
https://campbellcollaboration.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resources for researchers, authors categorised and prominently displayed
https://www.cochranelibrary.com/cdsr/reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advanced search filters including by type of research or intervention
https://gatesopenresearch.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prominent call to action asking for submissions
https://developmentevidence.3ieimpact.org/	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summary data on resources available and topics prominently displayed • Plain language summary and confidence indicator using SURE collaboration checklist
https://seepnetwork.org/Resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, user-friendly interface with prominent call-to-action buttons for resources - Learn more/Download

Suggested layouts for the evidence hub

The evidence hub should have a clean architecture that communicates the major content to end users without overburdening them with irrelevant information. The goal is (a) to increase the footfall and clicks by users and (b) to reduce search time. To this end, the architecture can be divided by themes, outputs and user engagement forum as in the below figure.



Based on the design principles elaborated above and the proposed architecture, we have created suggestive layouts as below (and attached with specific comments on the intention for placement of modules).

Primary layout (layout 1)

Home page



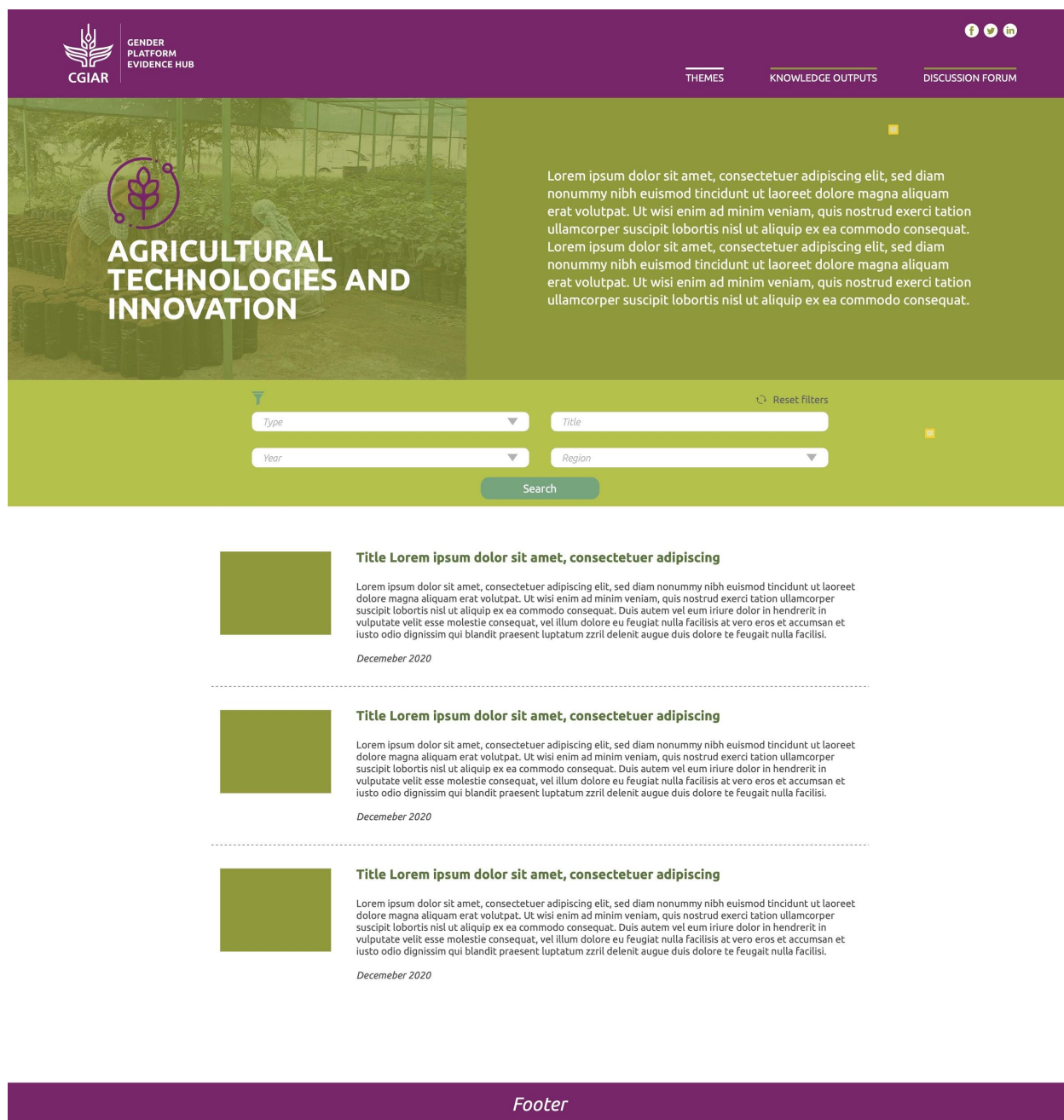
The main characteristics of this layout includes -

1. Double navigation - The theme pages are accessible through both the menu options as well as the theme boxes in the page layout. This ensures that the main themes¹ are visible to the end user.

¹ We have used same themes and content in these layouts, this can be replaced by the final themes of interest

2. Representative icons - Use of intuitive icons ensures that the user readily understands the message without having to spend time on the content or text.
3. Dashboard - A dynamic summary dashboard in a ticker form provides a quick overview of the extent of information accessible through the hub at any point in time.
4. Simple search bar - The search bar placed on the right for and within the dashboard provides a clean and simple tool to explore content for a new user who might not be looking for any specific information but in general wants to understand what is available in the hub.
5. The spotlight section showcases the most current and seminal knowledge output (publication, data etc.) that provides the user with a quick link to new research and insights without the need to search or go through all the resources.

Themes



The sample themes page showcases the suggested content under the first tab in the header menu. The theme pages will typically have a short description of the themes and sub themes and provide an option to search for particular resources under the theme.

Knowledge Outputs



KNOWLEDGE OUTPUTS

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CGIAR GROUP RESOURCES

GLOBAL EVIDENCE

EVIDENCE MAP

CGIAR GROUP RESOURCES

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Search

Search

Topics

- Food Systems Transformation
- Risk and resilience
- Institutions and governance
- Agricultural technologies and innovation
- Gender-responsive design and dissemination
- Gendered labor dynamics
- Value chains, markets, and entrepreneurship
- Gender Norms
- Breeding (crop, livestock, fish, forestry)
- Seed systems
- Nutrition and health

[Show more...](#)

Type

- Publication
- Datasets
- Other resources

Region

- Algeria
- Antigua and Barbuda
- Argentina
- Armenia
- Bahamas

[Show more...](#)

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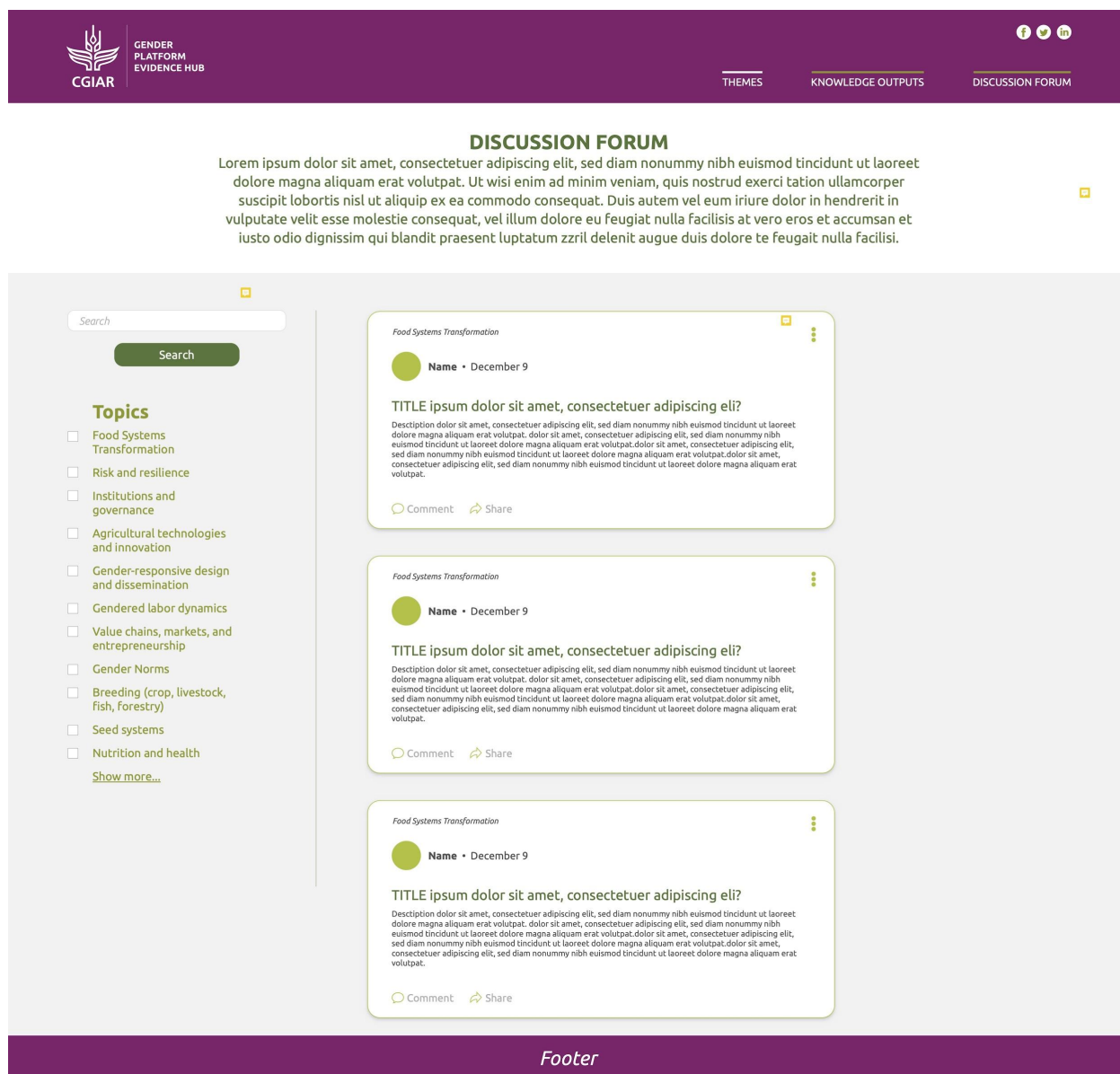
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The knowledge output page showcases the learning outputs under three categories -

- a) CGIAR group resources: This category houses all resources produced by CGIAR and its group entities
- b) Global evidence: This category houses all resources in the area of gender in agriculture and food systems from relevant sources around the globe
- c) Evidence map: This tab showcases the evidence in a visual form such as a open knowledge map

Under each category, along with a search function for users who intend to search with specific keywords, there is an option to search by topics, type and region. This elaborate search bar is intentionally placed in the sub page under knowledge products so that the user is able to filter using more than one option under each category (for e.g. resources such as publications and data, from India and China). For the more rigorous search filter, left alignment is ideal so that the outcomes of the search are prominently displayed on the right for ease of access.

Discussion forum



The discussion forum page organises user discussions according to the themes and conversations are neatly packaged under the relevant queries or topics initiated by the user. These discussions can be tagged and directly linked to the resources for content upload and download.

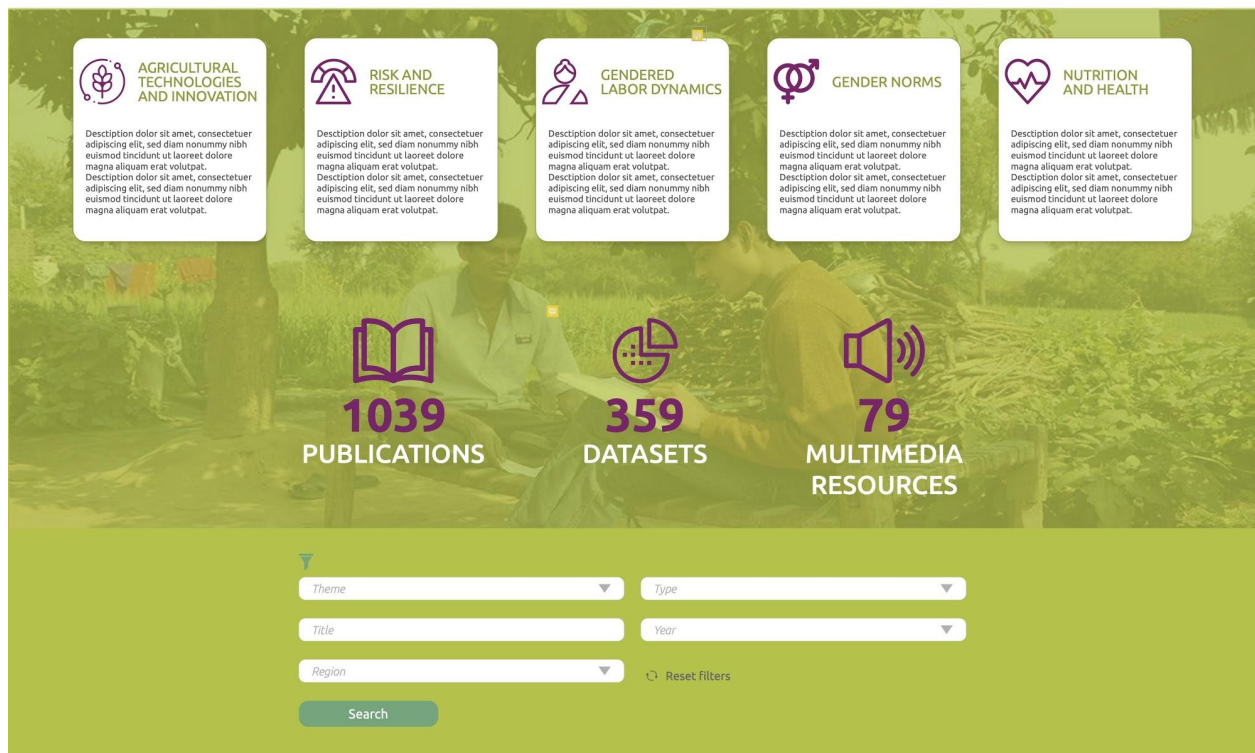
Other suggested layouts

The other two layouts suggested below provide a variation to the homepage content organisation according to the user eye movement, click efficiency and functionality.

Layout 2



The CGIAR Gender Platform Evidence Hub is a mechanism to consolidate the collective knowledge on credible, legitimate and relevant evidence in the realm of gender and food systems. It provides a basis for debating and building evidence-based knowledge and practice in the Platform's focus areas. The evidence hub will act as a central repository for collective intelligence or arguments in gender in agriculture and food systems.



Spotlight

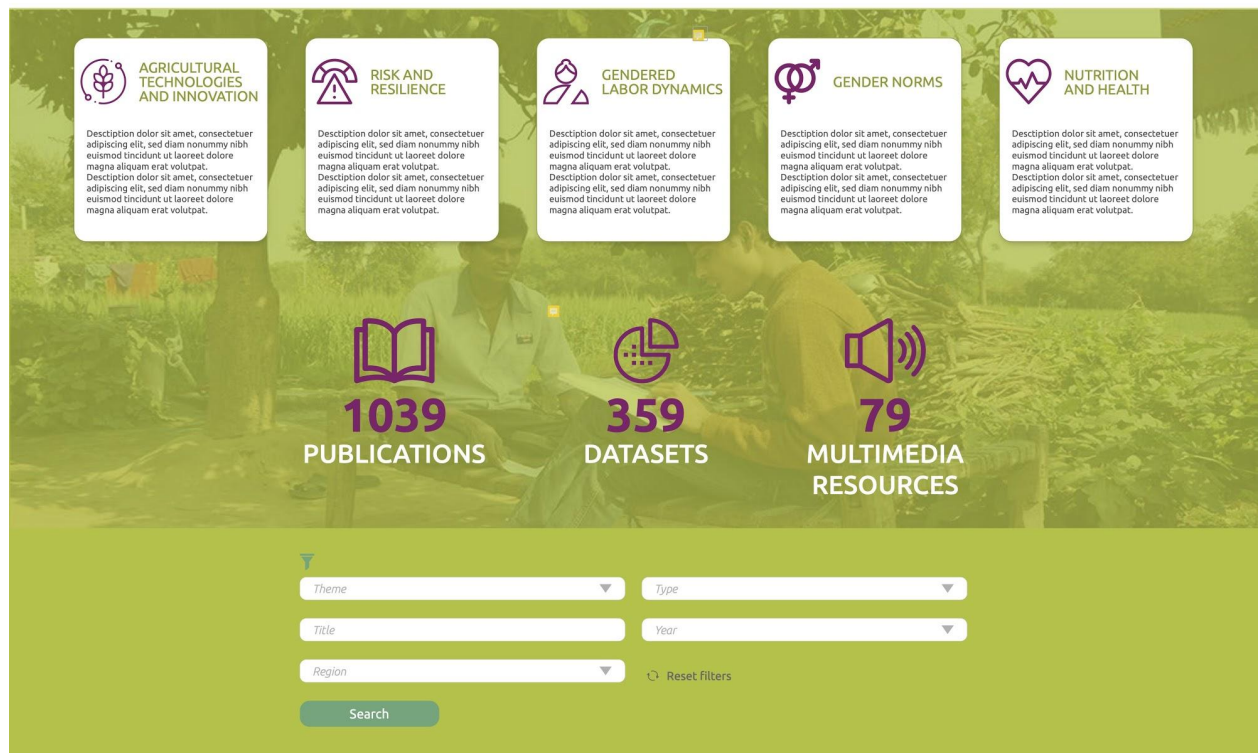


Footer

Layout 3



The CGIAR Gender Platform Evidence Hub is a mechanism to consolidate the collective knowledge on credible, legitimate and relevant evidence in the realm of gender and food systems. It provides a basis for debating and building evidence-based knowledge and practice in the Platform's focus areas. The evidence hub will act as a central repository for collective intelligence or arguments in gender in agriculture and food systems.



Spotlight



Footer

The suggestive layouts for the main pages of the evidence hub is intended to drive usage and enhance end user experience through simple and intuitive placements and a clean and efficient design. The final layout will, however, depend on the target audience, a/b testing, budget and technical capabilities, the desired content placement and other such important factors that might be a priority for the Platform organisers.

Costing

The costing of the hub microsite development (based on rates in India) assuming 10-15 unique pages comes to around **INR 6,00,000 (~USD 8500)**. Further details are provided in the table below -

	Item	Broad scope	Unit	Price per unit	No. of units	Total (INR)	Assumptions
1	Webpage development	Develop 10-15 Unique Pages as per information architecture (technical specifications as per platform)	Hourly rate	2000	240	480000	6 weeks for development, testing and deployment (240 hours) Average based on prevailing market rates in India, these can vary depending on whether the task is outsourced to agency or freelance developers.
		Develop templates for sub-pages - outputs, datasets					
		Beta testing					
		Deployment of Hub on the GENDER platform website					
2	Maintenance	Maintenance of software, plug-ins, updates, undertaking periodic checks, fixing errors, managing server traffic, backup of data, among other routine maintenance	Monthly rate	10000	12	120000	

		tasks					
	Total					600000	

References

<http://www.alliance4usefulevidence.org/assets/Alliance-Policy-Using-evidence-v4.pdf>

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